

Saturday Evening Post

Vol. II.—No. 47.

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FOR THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

ON THE DEATH OF AN INFANT.
Hark! a mother's sighs ascending
Upward from her tender breast,
Wailing as she gently bends
O'er her lifeless infant dead.
Over the shroud its form delighted,
Sitting in her fond embrace,
And by heaven-born joy excited
Printed kisses on its face.
Once by tender arms 'twas handled,
As it gently wearily smiled;
O'er a mother's kindness dandled
In her lap the lovely child.
But stern death with cruel power,
Laid it down in its cold bed,
To the blossom 'neath the flower,
Pierced its heart and struck it dead.
Now all sunk is every feature,
Glow'd forever are those eyes,
Now the fairest form in nature,
Lifeless, breathless, senseless lies.
Yet anon, and heavy passions
O'er it a sepulchral mound;
For a mother's fond caresses,
Mother earth shall clasp it round.
Soft, dear infant! be thy pillow,
Sweet and easy be thy sleep,
While around thy grave, the willow
Mourns! vigilance shall keep.
Oh! shall memory awaken
In the heart a strain sincere,
Oh! shall sorrow, sore forsaken,
O'er thy tombstone drop a tear.
Blessed babe! now full of gladness,
Circled round by light divine!
I would quit this world of sadness,
For such happiness as thine.

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PLAINS OF LONG ISLAND.

The Plains of Long Island are nearly at equal distance from the shores of the Atlantic and the Sound called the East River. They are about 13 miles in length and 5 or 6 in breadth, and uniformly level, no trees or bushes grow in them, except a small shrub in some places, not a foot high, called *kill grass*. Short grass similar to what some people call green grass, is frequently noticed, but generally the verdure has the appearance of poverty; the soil when thrown up by ploughing is of a very dark colour, and when manured is found to produce tolerable crops of rye and Indian corn. But a great part of the plains lie common, affording to the inhabitants living on their borders an extensive range of pasture for cattle. It is said the butter produced from pasture on the Plains is of a very superior quality. The country around is moderately watered with little hills and dales, but there are few springs and very little running water in the vicinity of the Plains. Of late years the inhabitants have encroached a little on these extensive commons by enclosing large fields for tillage. I saw one of these in the neighbourhood of Jericho, which contained about 600 acres. Roads or rather carriage tracks and cow paths run in almost every direction over the Plains, so that a person unacquainted with the country might easily miss his way and not readily find it again as one would suppose, where he could see from side to side, as they are winding and devious, and cross and re-cross each other without order or system, and though at first sight many appear nearly direct, yet bearing off by insensible degrees, they frequently conduct an inattentive traveller entirely out of his course. There is a tradition among the inhabitants which says that these plains were found by their ancestors in the same state they now appear, except that there was then tall grass six feet in height growing all over them, of which the original settlers occasionally cut fodder; in doing which they sometimes fell into marvellous encounters with the hostile Indians that skulked about in this grassy wilderness to annoy them. On the south edge of the plains is a thrifty village called Hempstead, another of less note called Jericho, nearly opposite to which on the north side is Jericho, a pleasant little town of forty or fifty houses, which is 27 miles from Brooklyn. It is supposed that

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THE STATE OF PROBATION.

The truth of this principle, that the present life is a state of probation and education to prepare us for another, is confirmed by every thing which we are around us—it is the only key which can open to us the designs of Providence in the economy of human affairs, the only clue which can guide us through that pathless wilderness, and the only compass on which this world could possibly have been formed or on which the history of it can be comprehended or explained. It could never have been formed on a plan of happiness, because it is every where overtopped with innumerable miseries; nor of misery, because it is interspersed with many enjoyments; it could and has been constituted for a scene of wisdom and virtue, because the history

of mankind is little more than a detail of their follies and wickedness; nor of vice, because that is no plan at all, being destructive of all existence, and consequently of its own. But on this system all that we here meet with may be easily accounted for: for this mixture of happiness and misery, of virtue and vice, necessarily results from a state of probation and education; as probation implies trials, sufferings and a capacity of offending, and education a propriety of chastisement for these offences.

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Sketches of Uncommon Characters.

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MEPHE WERKES.

This itinerant author and bookseller died lately at the house of Thomas Berry, in Claverhouse street, aged 64 years. He was born, and resided the greater part of his time at Oyster Bay, on Long Island, where he possessed a handsome estate, and supported the character of an honest, industrious, and benevolent minded man. The popular current of Merino speculation unfortunately carried him away with it; he disposed of his farm, turned the proceeds into Merinos, and a share in a manufacturing establishment in the north country bordering on Lake Champlain. By the injudicious management of these concerns, his circumstances shortly became embarrassed, and eventually he lost the whole of his property, and was imprisoned for debts he was unable to discharge; and it appears that these accumulated distresses were rendered more poignant by the death of his wife. By intercession made to the governor of the state on his behalf, he obtained his liberation from confinement, and being advanced in life and unable to obtain his livelihood by laborious exercise, he was encouraged by his friends to publish a collection of poems which he had written while in prison, with a hope that by the profits of the sale of them, he might be enabled to support himself in an honest manner, and peradventure be furnished with something to spare towards the discharge of his debts. His first volume containing near 400 pages, was printed at New-York in 1820, and is chiefly a versification from scripture history, which displays a comprehensive acquaintance with the sacred writings, and the pious and devotional feelings of the author. He published about the same time a pamphlet against slavery, and in 1822, another volume of poems upwards of 300 pages, and the life of William Penn, in verse, prefixed to a collection of Penn's Sermons, reprinted at his expense. In order to dispose of these works he travelled through various parts of New-England, New-York, New-Jersey and Pennsylvania, being recommended by written testimonials from a considerable number of persons of eminence, both in civil and religious society, to whom he was known in his native state. Although his writings may not be reckoned under the character of first rate poetry, in many places his lines partake of a free and easy flow of expression pleasing to the fancy, and the matter calculated to enlighten the understanding and to promote virtue and piety, especially in the minds of youthful readers. "While he enjoyed all the comforts of life, with a steady aversion to sloth and to strife: As time was advancing, arrived a sad day, When his wealth took a flight like an eagle away— Tho' the waters overflowed, when advanced far from youth, How strong and how sweetly consoling was truth, Tho' the scene was severe, as it rose in degree, Prepared for the reason was strength known to be: Tho' the strip of companion, of houses and lands, A monument truly of mercy he stands." So writes the author concerning himself; but he is now "gone to that bourne from whence no traveller returns"—and though he was not enabled to discharge all his pecuniary obligations, his efforts to do so, and the sacrifices which he made to retrieve his misfortunes furnish an incontestable evidence of the honest intentions of his heart, and his writings remain a monument of his genius and the purity of his soul.

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TALES OF THE DEEP.—No. 1.

THE STORM.

Poor Maria! it was a tempestuous night when we beheld her last. She was seated on the windlass on the bow of our vessel, in a state of distraction; it was an dark and gloomy scene, and she was in the length of our deck, and it was only by her almost incessant ravings that we knew she yet existed and had not fallen a prey to the surges which every moment swept over our little vessel; for you must know the storm had increased to such a rate, and we were so faint and weary with exertion, that she had become perfectly unmanageable—indeed we had given up all attempts at keeping her out of the trough of the sea, and she lay like a log, rolling and burying herself at times completely under it. It was soon after the commencement of this storm, that we missed the young lady. I was that moment basking the last bit of canvas the wind had left us to the main boom, when a faint shriek arose from the fore part of the vessel, and instantly ceased; I knew from whom that shriek came, and a thrill of horror ran through my blood as I saw the white foam dashing among the fore rigging, and heard the last of the sea gurgling over the sides, I almost shuddered at going forward to ascertain the truth of my fears, though I sprang with all the speed I was master of, but saw nothing; the decks were completely swept of every article, even the railing had been torn away by the violence of the sea. All was taken off—every thing had gone! poor Maria! I returned to my station on the quarter deck, and gazed over the stern upon the long white space that our vessel left in her wake, but could see nothing. I once or twice thought I could hear an imploring cry, and distinguish a shrill and weak voice, begging for mercy, but the roar of the storm soon quieted every other sound and the whistling of the winds sometimes gave way to the more harsh and appalling roar of the mighty deep as it threw up its white comb towards the clouds, and broke above and around us in every direction. This was a night of trembling and fear, a time of awe, of adoration and prayer—the voice of the Most High was heard upon the deep, and his thunders rolled among the clouds. A sublime spectacle of awful and terrific grandeur, from which every thing mortal, the proudest boast of art, the productions of years and of ages, dwindled into utter nothingness and insignificance. The history of Maria is short but eventful, the few last days of her existence were crowded with events of no ordinary cast, and in my next I will endeavour to give a brief recital of the sufferings and sorrows which had robbed her of reason ere the waves of death swept her from this stage of being.

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EMMETT.

In the county of Galway in Ireland, there lived a young couple, the children of two neighboring cottagers who were betrothed to each other from the earliest period of infancy. They had been educated in the same rude retirement, had partaken of the same fare, had shared in the same amusements and were now anxiously waiting the period of their union. Their parents were of the lowest class of Irish peasantry, and possessed no inconsiderable share of the natural virtues and vices. With dispositions naturally good, their passions had been inflamed by the civil dissensions of the period, and embittered by the pressure of acute poverty; and finally induced them to join in the ill-fated rebellion that terminated in the death of poor Emmett, and his associates. It happened one night that the father and mother of the young girl, with the youth to whom she was betrothed, were sitting round their little fireside, gloomily awaiting an increase of poverty and misery, when a sudden knock at the cottage door roused them from their reverie, and induced them to hasten to the gate. A tall, elegant stranger, closely muffled up in a military cloak, entered their humble dwelling, and without waiting for the consent of the party seated himself in a chair opposite, and through the folds of his robe attentively surveyed the group. He appeared young, noble, but wrapt in gloom, and worn down with anxieties; which at the period to which we allude, were felt more or less by almost every Irish Patriot. After a long pause, he relaxed somewhat in his scrutiny, and addressed himself to the young man, and his intended father-in-law, and having insisted on the departure of the females, shrouded his face more closely in his mantle, and in blended accents of pity, shame, and indignation, commenced an animated recital of the civil dissensions of Ireland, of its shameful subjugation by England, its decay of public spirit and private worth, and terminated his discourse by solemnly conjuring them that they valued their rights, their liberties and their principles, to join with the constitutional warmth of Irishmen, in a rebellion that was yet in embryo, and which was raised for the preservation of their country. Fortunately his discourse was not lost upon his audience. The iron of slavery had entered into their souls, they had felt the sting of poverty, and the sense of their national degradation, and were ready to embrace any prospect of emancipating themselves, however desperate it might appear. They had hearts too that could feel, and hands that could wield a sword; and as the stranger saw the tears coursing down the cheeks of the young cottager, and the crimson fire of indignation flashing from the eyes of the elder, he embraced them both with transport, and promised to meet them on the ensuing evening, on the bleak moor that adjoined the village where they resided. The night soon arrived, and having taken an affectionate farewell, the one of his betrothed bride, the other of his wife and daughter, the couple set forward on their march. As the clock from the village church struck eight, they entered on the place appointed for their meeting. At the remotest corner of the moor they observed a man folded in a night-mantle hastening to join them. It was the stranger; he hailed their appearance with transport, and taking a hand of each, desired them to accompany him in silence. The party soon quitted the moor, and as they cut rapidly across the high road, discovered a numerous company of horse patrol scouring along the path with their swords drawn, and their steel helmets flashing through the darkness of the night. By creeping under the hedges they were easily enabled to avoid them, and when the sound of their receding steps could be heard no longer they cautiously stole from their hiding place, and pursued their midnight march. They had now entered on a dark mountain pass, enclosed on either side by enormous precipices which rose to an awful distance above them; beyond, towered a gloomy forest of pines, and in the right of the road, in the distance, appeared the bleak hills of Wicklow. The dead of night drew on, and as the hollow wind roared dimly through the opening cliffs in the mountains, the spirits of the travellers assumed a corresponding tone of desolation. They moved on in silence, however, without an occasional murmur from the cottager and his son-in-law, as to the direction of the road they were pursuing; they had already commented on an angry expostulation, when the wailing moan peeped through the dark moving mass of clouds in

which she was buried, and stretched the pale face of the deep black storm, which blanketed the base of the mountain; along whose base now they were winding. In a few minutes they gained the further side of the pass, and distinctly heard the hoarse roar of the sea, the yawning caverns that seemed opening to receive them. They advanced towards the coast, and an Irishman in the native dress of his country, pointing to and fro, with a pile in his hand, heavy broadsword by his side. "What there!" he exclaimed, leveling his broadsword at the approaching party. "Friends," was the answer. "The watchword!" "The Emerald Isle," replied the other and hastened briskly on, accompanied by his two astonished associates.

After winding through a narrow passage, and admitted but one at a time, they entered a room, dimly lighted by the glimmering radiance of the moon, which illumined the dark walls of the cavern. A large charcoal fire burnt in the grate of the cave, and threw a sulphurous glow on the rugged features of the groups that surrounded it. From the centre of the room, a small lamp was suspended, and on every side were broadsword, pistols, and other instruments of destruction. On the entrance of the strangers, with his companions, the rebels advanced to meet him, and paid him that involuntary respect, which is slightly never fails of extending from the victor. He had thrown off his mantle, but his countenance was carefully concealed in a mask and hood, and detection impossible. He was habited in a coat of green, with a white plume of feathers waving in his cap, and with firm steps he moved towards his two companions, and recommended them to the rest of the group, as friends to the liberty of Ireland, and who had resolved to join their force in her service. They were received with shouts of applause, the fearful oath of allegiance was taken, and they were instantly equipped with arms to be used in the ensuing contest.

Days rolled on, and with every hour the rebels received a formidable addition to their numbers during the morning, and assembled each night the dawn we have just described, but with one precaution, they were enabled to baffle the penetration of the soldiers who were stationed in companies throughout the country. The mountains of Ireland in the mean while raged with convulsions; proscriptions followed, processions of sentences of liberty were tortured into the language of treason, and the English military oppressed the unfortunate Irish with the open intimidation of tyranny. The whole of the lower classes, so that the joke fell the heaviest, determined to struggle for the recovery of their freedom, and wisely resolved to take the first opportunity of asserting their energies.

On a gloomy night in Autumn, they assembled in Thomas-street, Dublin, where they had previously deposited their arms and awaited in anxious expectation the signal that was to announce their rising. As the bell from the castle clock struck the hour of six, lights were seen burning on the summits of the neighboring hills, the roar of artillery was heard, and a few minutes later, the place in the crowded streets of the city. The alarm bell was rung, the riot act read, and the drums of the military called to action. At this instant a party of rebels well armed with pikes and broad swords, with the young stranger at their head, moved towards the castle. A regiment of soldiers was ordered to attack them, but such was the fury of their charge, and so animated the conduct of the hero who commanded them that they were dispersed on the first onset. They had now gained the castle wall, and sword in hand the stranger, followed closely by the cottager and his son-in-law, mounted the ramparts. This last was shot dead at the first onset, and the other two separated from each other by the violence of the struggle. Numbers at length prevailed, the rebels were eventually subdued, their leader taken prisoner while the cottager was almost the only one who escaped. For days subsequent to the battle, he continued wandering about the streets, in hopes of encountering the gallant and interesting stranger, with whose imprisonment he was yet unacquainted. At length, as the hour of trial approached, and he fancied himself free from all chance of detection, he resolved to enter the hall of justice, and boldly endeavour to address him. The conviction of the rebels had in part commenced when he entered; a deep silence prevailed, and a young man was busy in his defence. He was of a noble and commanding aspect, with a countenance shaded by the deepest—the gentlest melancholy. But his voice—it struck immediately to the agonized feelings of the cottager, and convinced him that the person he now beheld was the stranger of his fancy, the Emmett, the patriot of his country. He denied the charge of treason with the most impassioned eloquence, he spoke warily—and the tears sprang to his eyes, as he recalled the memory of the girl he loved, and whom he had given up, in his superior attachment to his country. He wept—but he wept not for himself, and the tears that had never fallen for his own misfortune, stole down his faded cheek, when he reflected on the miseries he had endured on the poor associates of his rebellion. For himself he sought not pardon, but he supplicated the mercy of the judge for the wretched he had misled, and concluded with that affecting appeal to posterity which can never be forgotten: "Let no man write my epitaph; for so no man who knows my motives dare vindicate them, let no prejudice or ignorance avenge them; but let them and me repose in obscurity and peace, and my tomb remain unvisited, till other times and other men can do justice to my character." Even this appeal failed of its effect, he was condemned as a traitor, and his execution was ordered on the ensuing Monday. Many a bright eye was dimmed, and many a gay heart felt a pang of commiseration, for the gallant patriot.

The evening before his death, while the workmen were busy with the scaffold, and the din of their hammers sounded like a solemn dirge for the dead, a young lady was ushered into his dungeon. It was the girl whom he had so fondly loved, and who had now come to bid her eternal farewell. He was leaning in a melancholy mood, as she entered, against a window frame of his prison, and the heavy clanking of his chains smote dimly on her heart. The interview was bitterly affecting, and melted even the callous soul of the jailer; as for Emmett himself, he wept and spoke little; but as he pressed his beloved in silence to his bosom his countenance betrayed his emotions. In a low voice he choked by anguish, he besought her not to forget him, he reminded her of their former happiness of their love, of the day long past of their childhood, and concluded by requesting her sometimes to visit the grave where his ashes mouldered, and though the world might repeat his name with scorn, to cling to his memory with affection.

At this instant the evening bell pealed from the neighboring church—Emmett started at the sound, and as he felt that this was the last time he should ever hear his dismal echoes, he folded his beloved still closer to his heart, and bent over her slinking form, with eyes streaming with affection. The turnkey entered at the moment, ashamed of his weakness, he dashed the starting drops from his eyes, and a frown again lowered on his countenance.

The Sea Gull has been found efficient, well suited to the service in which it has been employed, and by repeated trials in the gales, an uncommonly fine and safe net. It has been hauled up high and dry at the Navy Yard in Washington, where she is now undergoing some slight repairs and alterations preparatory to a new campaign against the buccaniers. It is expected that she will sail with the rest of the squadron from the 1st inst.

